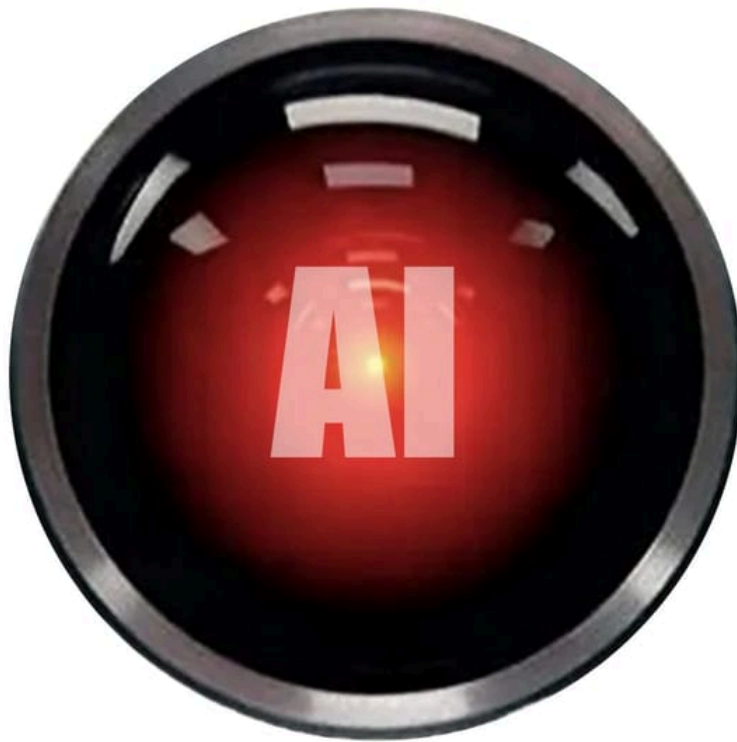


The Rise of the Immortal Dictator | What Will AI Mean for Freedom and Government?



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"If one company or small group of people manages to develop god
superintelligence, they could take over the world. At least when there's an evil

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dictator, that human is going to die. But for an AI, there would be no death. It would live forever. And then you'd have an immortal dictator from which we can never escape.”—Elon Musk (2018)

The Deep State is about to go turbocharged.

While the news media fixates on the extent to which Project 2025 may be the Trump Administration's playbook for locking down the nation, there is a more subversive power play taking place under cover of Trump's unique brand of circus politics.

Take a closer look at what's unfolding, and you will find that all appearances to the contrary, Trump isn't planning to *do away with* the Deep State. Rather, he was *hired* by the Deep State to usher in the golden age of AI.

Get ready for Surveillance State 2.0.

To achieve this turbocharged surveillance state, the government is turning to its most powerful weapon yet: artificial intelligence. AI, with its ability to learn, adapt, and operate at speeds unimaginable to humans, is poised to become the engine of this new world order.

Over the course of 70 years, the technology has developed so rapidly that it has gone from early computers exhibiting a primitive form of artificial intelligence to machine learning (AI systems that learn from historic data) to deep learning (machine learning that mimics the human brain) to generative AI, which can create original content, i.e., it appears able to think for itself.

What we are approaching is the point of no return.

In tech speak, this point of no return is more aptly termed “singularity,” the point at which AI eclipses its human handlers and becomes all-powerful. Elon Musk has predicted that singularity could happen by 2026. AI scientist Ray Kurzweil imagines it happening it closer to 2045.

While the scientific community has a lot to say about the world-altering impact of artificial intelligence on every aspect of our lives, little has been said about its growing role in government and its oppressive effect on our freedoms, especially “the core democratic principles of privacy, autonomy, equality, the political process, and the rule of law.”

According to a report from Accenture, it is estimated that across both the public and private sectors, generative AI has the potential to automate a significant portion of jobs across various sectors.

Here’s a thought: what if Trump’s pledge to cut the federal work force isn’t really about *eliminating* government bureaucracy but *outsourcing* it to the AI tech sector?

Certainly, Trump has made no secret of his plans to make AI a priority. Indeed, Trump signed the first-ever Executive Order on AI in 2019. More recently, Trump issued an executive order giving the technology sector a green light to develop and deploy AI without any guardrails in place to limit the risks it might pose to U.S. national security, the economy, public health or safety.

President Biden was no better, mind you. His executive order, which Trump repealed, merely instructed the tech sector to share the results of AI safety tests with the U.S. government.

Yet following much the same pattern that we saw with the rollout of drones, while the government has been quick to avail itself of AI technology, it has done little to nothing to ensure that rights of the American people are protected.

Indeed, we are altogether lacking any guardrails for transparency, accountability and adherence to the rule of law when it comes to the government’s use of AI.

As Karl Manheim and Lyric Kaplan point out in a chilling article in the *Yale Journal of Law & Technology* about **the risks to privacy and democracy posed by AI**, “[a]rtificial intelligence is the most disruptive technology of the modern era... Its impact is likely to dwarf even the development of the internet as it enters every corner of our lives... Advances in AI herald not just a new age in computing, but also present new

dangers to social values and constitutional rights. The threat to privacy from social media algorithms and the Internet of Things is well known. What is less appreciated is the even greater threat that AI poses to democracy itself.

Cue the rise of “digital authoritarianism” or “algocracy—rule by algorithm.”

In an algocracy, “Mark Zuckerberg and Sundar Pichai, CEOs of Facebook and Google, have more control over Americans’ lives and futures than do the representatives we elect.”

Digital authoritarianism, as the Center for Strategic and International Studies cautions, involves **the use of information technology to surveil, repress, and manipulate the populace, endangering human rights and civil liberties, and co-opting and corrupting the foundational principles of democratic and open societies, “including freedom of movement, the right to speak freely and express political dissent, and the right to personal privacy, online and off.”**

How do we protect our privacy against the growing menace of overreach and abuse by a technological sector working with the government?

The ability to do so may already be out of our hands.

In 2024, at least 37 federal government agencies ranging from the Departments of Homeland Security and Veterans Affairs to Health and Human Services reported more than 1700 uses of AI in carrying out their work, double from the year before. That does not even begin to touch on agencies that did not report their usage, or usage at the state and local levels.

Of those 1700 cases at the federal level, **227 were labeled rights- or safety-impacting.**

A particularly disturbing example of how AI is being used by government agencies in rights- and safety-impacting scenarios comes from an investigative report by *The Washington Post* on how law enforcement agencies across the nation are using “artificial intelligence tools in a way they were never intended to be used: as a shortcut to finding and arresting suspects without other evidence.”

This is what is referred to within tech circles as “**automation bias**,” a tendency to **blindly trust decisions made by powerful software, ignorant to its risks and limitations**. In one particular case, police used AI-powered facial recognition technology to arrest and jail a 29-year-old man for brutally assaulting a security guard. It would take Christopher Gatlin two years to clear his name.

Gatlin is one of at least eight known cases nationwide in which police reliance on **AI facial recognition software has resulted in resulted in wrongful arrests** arising from an **utter disregard for basic police work (such as checking alibis, collecting evidence, corroborating DNA and fingerprint evidence, ignoring suspects’ physical characteristics)** and the need to meet constitutional standards of due process and probable cause. According to *The Washington Post*, “Asian and Black people were up to 100 times as likely to be misidentified by some software as White men.”

The numbers of cases in which AI is contributed to false arrests and questionable police work is likely much higher, given the extent to which police agencies across the country are adopting the technology and will only rise in the wake of the Trump Administration’s intent to shut down law enforcement oversight and policing reforms.

“How do I beat a machine?” asked one man who was wrongly arrested by police for assaulting a bus driver based on an incorrect AI match.

It is becoming all but impossible to beat the AI machine.

When used by agents of the police state, it leaves “we the people” even more vulnerable.

So where do we go from here?

For the Trump Administration, it appears to be full steam ahead, starting with Stargate, a \$500 billion AI infrastructure venture aimed at building massive data centers. Initial reports suggest that the AI data centers could be tied to digital health records and used to develop a cancer vaccine. Of course, massive health data centers for use by AI will mean that one’s health records are fair game for any and all sorts of identification, tracking and flagging.

But that's just the tip of the iceberg.

The surveillance state, combined with AI, is creating a world in which there's nowhere to run and nowhere to hide. We're all presumed guilty until proven innocent now.

Thanks to the 24/7 surveillance being carried out by the government's sprawling spy network of fusion centers, we are all just sitting ducks, waiting to be tagged, flagged, targeted, monitored, manipulated, investigated, interrogated, heckled and generally harassed by agents of the American police state.

Without having ever knowingly committed a crime or been convicted of one, you and your fellow citizens have likely been assessed for behaviors the government might consider devious, dangerous or concerning; assigned a threat score based on your associations, activities and viewpoints; and catalogued in a government database according to how you should be approached by police and other government agencies based on your particular threat level.

Before long, every household in America will be flagged as a threat and assigned a threat score.

It's just a matter of time before you find yourself **wrongly accused, investigated and confronted by police based on a data-driven algorithm or risk assessment culled together by a computer program run by artificial intelligence.**

It's a setup ripe for abuse.

Writing for the *Yale Journal*, Manheim and Kaplan conclude that “[h]umans may not be at risk as a species, but we are surely at risk in terms of our democratic institutions and values.”

Privacy—Manheim and Kaplan succinctly describe it as “the right to make personal decisions for oneself, the right to keep one’s personal information confidential, and the right to be left alone are all ingredients of the fundamental right of privacy”—is especially at risk.

Indeed, with every new AI surveillance technology that is adopted and deployed without any regard for privacy, Fourth Amendment rights and due process, the rights of the citizenry are being marginalized, undermined and eviscerated.

We teeter on the cusp of a cultural, technological and societal revolution the likes of which have never been seen before.

AI surveillance is already re-orienting our world into one in which freedom is almost unrecognizable by doing what the police state lacks the manpower and resources to do efficiently or effectively: be everywhere, watch everyone and everything, monitor, identify, catalogue, cross-check, cross-reference, and collude.

As Eric Schmidt, the former Google CEO remarked, “We know where you are. We know where you’ve been. We can more or less know what you’re thinking about... Your digital identity will live forever... because there’s no delete button.”

The ramifications of *any* government wielding such unregulated, unaccountable power are chilling, as **AI surveillance provides the ultimate means of repression and control for tyrants and benevolent dictators alike.**

Indeed, China’s social credit system, where citizens are assigned scores based on their behavior and compliance, offers a glimpse into this dystopian future.

This is not a battle against technology itself, but against its misuse. It’s a fight to retain our humanity, our dignity, and our freedom in the face of unprecedented technological power. It’s a struggle to ensure that AI serves us, not the other way around.

Faced with this looming threat, the time to act is now, before the lines between citizen and subject, between freedom and control, become irrevocably blurred.

The future of freedom depends on it.

So demand transparency. Demand accountability.

Demand an Electronic Bill of Rights that protects “we the people” from the encroaching surveillance state.

We need safeguards in place to ensure the right to data ownership and control (the right to know what data is being collected about them, how it's being used, who has access to it, and the right to be “forgotten”); the right to algorithmic transparency (to understand how algorithms that affect them make decisions, particularly in areas like loan applications, job hiring, and criminal justice) and due process accountability; the right to privacy and data security, including restrictions on government and corporate use of AI-powered surveillance technologies, particularly facial recognition and predictive policing; the right to digital self-determination (freedom from automated discrimination based on algorithmic profiling) and the ability to manage and control one's online identity and reputation; and effective mechanisms to seek redress for harms caused by AI systems.

AI deployed without any safeguards in place to protect against overreach and abuse, especially within government agencies, has the potential to become what Elon Musk described as an “immortal dictator,” one that lives forever and from which there is no escape.

Whatever you choose to call it—the police state, the Deep State, the surveillance state—this “immortal dictator” will be the future face of the government unless we rein it in now.

As I point out in my book *Battlefield America: The War on the American People* and in its fictional counterpart *The Erik Blair Diaries*, next year could be too late.

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